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LOADSTAR LETTER #18

January 1995 Companion newsletter for LOADSTAR #128

"Real News! We Speak Commodore!"

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Freak Magnetic Storm Causes Multitude Of Errors In LOADSTAR Letter #17

Sharp-eyed readers may have noticed all sorts of mistakes on LOADSTAR LETTER #17.



These mistakes included incorrect dates throughout the newsletter. Not only that! Jeff *dared* to misspell LOADSTAR! Jeff Jones accepts full blame for the errors. The letter went straight from the

laser printer to the printing press without proofreading. We wanted LOADSTAR #127 to get to you on time so we hurried the newsletter. This sudden flurry of mental and computer activity caused elevated levels of alpha waves at the Softdisk office. The next thing we knew there was another rare freak magnetic storm a-brewing. Dogs and cats living together. Mass hysteria. Pentium chips performing perfectly. Jeff Jones making mistakes.

The magnetic storm has passed, and the LOADSTAR LETTER #18 is perfect. Any error found in this newsletter is an official Persian flaw. After all, hubris does ride perfection like a bronco.

FBI Uses Internet In Mail-Bomber Search 12/14/94

WASHINGTON, D.C., U.S.A., 1994 DEC 14 (NB) -- The Federal Bureau of Investigations has gone to the Internet in its search for the serial mail-bomber called "Unabom." Unabom's toll has now reached two killed and 23 wounded after advertising executive Thomas Mosser, 50, was killed by a letter bomb last Saturday.

The FBI has dubbed the bomber Unabom because of his propensity to target universities

and airline officials. The bomber also goes after computer scientists as a special target.

In June 1993, noted Yale University computer scientist David Gelernter was a Unabom victim, receiving major injuries to his hands when he opened a letter bomb.



Earlier bombs went off at computer science and electrical engineering labs at Northwestern University, University of Utah, Vanderbilt, University of California at Berkeley (Cory Hall has been struck twice), and the University of Michigan.

On September 11, 1985, Hugh Sutton, owner the Rentech Computer Company in Sacramento, Calif., was killed by one of the devices.

In June, 1993, Attorney General Janet Reno established a special Unabom task force of federal law enforcement agencies from the FBI, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division of the Treasury Department, and the US Postal Service. Their work has been mostly in the San Francisco and Sacramento area. The videotape sized bomb that killed Mosser was mailed December 3 from the San Francisco area.

The FBI is making information

available on the Internet as "another medium that enables us to reach as wide an audience as possible," according to Special Agent William Tafoya of the task force. "Second," he adds, "Internet users are precisely the type of individuals that to date have been recipients of explosive devices attributed to Unabom -- scholars and researchers."

The FBI is asking anyone with information that might help identify the bomber to come forward, either by contacting the task force at 800-701-2662 or through electronic-mail.

The agency has put up information about the bombings on the Internet, including a detailed chronology of the bombings. The information is available in three ways: Anonymous ftp at <ftp://naic.nasa.gov/>; on a gopher at <gopher://naic.nasa.gov/11/government-resources/fbi>; and on the World Wide Web at <http://naic.nasa.gov/fbi>. The Unabom gopher is also reachable through America Online's Internet service.

The agency is offering a \$1 million reward for information leading to the identification, arrest and conviction of the bomber.

An FBI spokesman told Newsbytes this is the first time the agency has used the Internet in an investigation, but that it is likely to use it again in the future as a way to reach out to more people and people who might not be reached by conventional appeals for help.

(Ken Maize/19941214)

Postage Increase A Benefit, Says Fax Industry Exec

12/13/94 DENVER, COLORADO, U.S.A., 1994 DEC 13 (NB) -- At least one person isn't losing any sleep over the soon-to-be \$0.03 increase in the cost of a first class postage stamp.

"Each time the postal service does something to infuriate the general public, which is fairly often, they

encourage businesses to reevaluate, to look for a more dependable, less expensive and faster type of communication," according to Steve Bonneau, president of Infaxamation, a three year-old broadcast fax and fax-on-demand service company.

Bonneau said the entire broadcast fax and fax-on-demand industry was founded on that premise and he predicts the industry's projected growth rate of more than 40 percent over the next five years will probably jump to 50 percent because of the increase in the price of a stamp. The increase takes effect January 1, 1995.

Bonneau said the broadcast fax industry, which market research company Market Finders estimates at \$450 million annually, serves companies that do business-to-business marketing via direct-mail. The increase, which can be as much as 11 percent according to Infaxamation, will cause businesses to look to other sources to accomplish their marketing goals.

That is where broadcast fax comes in. A company such as Infaxamation takes a customer's fax and transmits it to hundreds or even thousands of addressees in the same manner that direct-mail companies distribute what the public often refers to as "junk mail."

Broadcast, says Infaxamation, eliminates labor costs associated with bulk mail like folding, stamping and delivery. Another

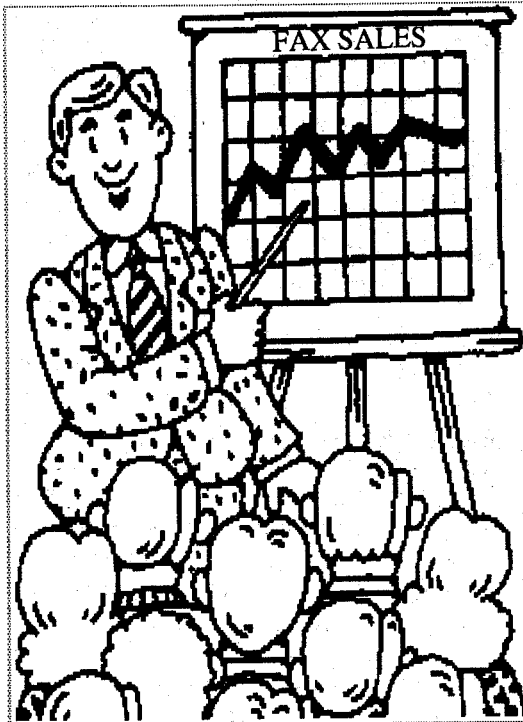
advantage cited by the company is that customers are not charged for undelivered faxes and they receive reports listing errors, incorrect fax numbers, and delivery times.

Charles George, Infaxamation marketing director, says broadcast fax is more than a way to send junk mail. "One way to use broadcast fax is to advertise your services over the fax lines.

Another way is to stay in touch with your vendors or sales agents across the country. That information is much more vital," said George.

He claimed the horror stories about reams of paper on the floor when a business opened each day due to the receipt of "junk faxes" is a thing of the past since the federal government passed a law that prohibits a company from sending a fax to someone it does not already have a business relationship with.

Fax-on-demand, or faxback as it is sometimes



known, is a system that lets you call a business, follow voice prompts to enter codes via your touch-tone phone, and receive specifically requested information. After answering the prompts the caller enters his or her fax number and hangs up. The computer system immediately faxes the requested information to the specified number.

According to figures provided by Infaxamation, mass mailers can lower their distribution costs more than 50 percent by using broadcast fax. They can also increase the return on investment, according to George. While he did not have any industry-wide statistics immediately available, he told

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Newsbytes Infaxamation has a client that sends out about 70,000 faxes per week and reports it has increased its number of responses by a factor of more than seven over earlier direct-mail campaigns.

You need more than a single phone line and a desktop PC to run an operation the size of Infaxamation. George told Newsbytes the company has 200 outbound phone lines connected to a client-server computer system that uses a minicomputer as the server and can deliver up to 60,000 pages overnight. That could be two pages to 30,000 fax numbers or four pages to 15,000 addresses, for example. (Jim Mallory/19941213/Press contact: Charles George, Infaxamation, 303-820-3677; Public contact: Infaxamation, 303-820-3677 or 800-329-4632)

Jeff Gets Into Another MPS-801 Argument Over The Internet. Won't Endorse An "Inferior Product" In The Name Of "Commodore Support"

In the Commodore discussion "party line" bkurson@nando.net wrote:

- >One of the reasons I let my Loadstar sub
- >expire was an editorial by them saying that
- >MPS801 printers are obsolete and if you were
- >smart you would go buy a real printer. This
- >did not seem like a very good attitude by
- >someone claiming to support COMMODORE
- >products. They do have lots of great software
- >on their disks but don't look for many of them to
- >print on your MPS801.

Here is Jeff's Response:

I think you're way off the mark here. It used to be when magazines refused advertisements and gave hard-hitting reviews, it was a sign of fearless integrity. LOADSTAR supports the C-64 and C-128. We are BY NO MEANS obligated to endorse every product that Commodore ever peddled -- especially inferior and over-priced products like the MPS 801. Even with the Amiga, Commodore was known for making 2nd rate peripherals, far inferior to third party developers. Commodore made great computers, but they weren't known for their printers. We're not going to sing praises to heaven just because a printer has Commodore's name on it, not if it's not good.

When I suggested the subscriber get a better printer, it was because the reader was pushing the limits of the MPS-801, trying to use GEOS. For GEOS, you need at least an 80 dpi printer. The MPS 801 is a 60 dpi printer. I can literally do better than that with a well-sharpened pencil.

We've gotten TONS of letters from people who are thrilled with their new printers, people who can't believe how fast their new printers (most any other than the 801 will do) printed graphics.

I was the last one in my circle of Commodore

friends to hang on to his MPS-801. That was way back in 1987. In 1994 it's not unrealistic to expect the majority of Commodore users to have at least a 9-pin Epson compatible printer with an interface or one of the commodore ready STAR printers.

LOADSTAR has no working MPS 801 printers left. They didn't stand up to professional use. They just broke! These printers are OLD as well as non-standard. The MPS 801 was particularly bad because the print quality was so inferior. I CANNOT THINK of a printer with worse output. I once did a church newsletter with Newsroom and was told that the newsletter looked so bad that we couldn't publish it. I took the newsletter to my tax preparer's home. She had a STAR SG-10 back in 1985. By today's standards the SG-10 is a lemon, but when I showed my pastor the same letter printed from the star, he was impressed.

If you have an MPS 801 printer, great, but let's face facts. It's among the lowest of low printers. It's not a 9-pin printer -- it's a 7-pin. It's not a neat 7-pin, it's a cheap 7-pin. Resolution isn't the problem. EACH DOT is fuzzy. It can't even print a GEOS pic full across without a special driver to throw away pixels (read detail). I once sold my 801 to a friend who was trying to help me out in hard times. She hated it so much, she made me buy it back.

At work, people used to think that the C-64 couldn't print a decent letter until our readers started buying Epson compatibles and bubble jets.

I defended my MPS-801 for four years, but now even with DAISY PRINT, a program that I wrote on a LOADSTAR issue, even my DPS 1101 daisy wheel printer can produce sharper graphic printouts. Please understand that I'm telling the truth about the printer and not attacking the user. The MPS-801 is the Yugo/Pinto of printers. I have a 1987 Ford Tempo. Hey, I admit that what I drive is a piece of junk. I do the same for my computer equipment.

Historians Sue Over President Bush E-mail

12/15/94 WASHINGTON, D.C., U.S.A., 1994 DEC 15 (NB) -- A group of historians and activists have sued the National Archives in an attempt to gain access to Bush administration electronic records. The suit aims to prevent acting Archivist of the US, Trudy Peterson, from implementing an agreement between Bush and former Archivist Don Wilson that the records would be under former President Bush's control.

On Bush's last night in office, the White House staff reportedly removed electronic records created by the chief-of-staff and senior presidential advisors by taking away the hard drives from White House computers and transferring them, and some 5,000

computer tapes, to the National Archives. The same evening, according to the suit, Bush and Wilson signed an agreement giving Bush "exclusive legal control" over the records.

At the time, Wilson was reportedly negotiating to become head of the Bush Center in Houston, the official Bush presidential library, a position he later took. He named Peterson to replace him at the archives and the Clinton administration has yet to pick its own Archivist.

The American Historical Association, the American Library Association, the Organization of American Historians, Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, the Center for National Security Studies, the National Security Archive, and journalist Scott Armstrong and research Eddie Becker have asked the court to block Peterson from honoring the agreement. They contend it violates the 1978 Presidential Records Act, enacted by Congress after disputes over the Watergate tapes in the Nixon administration.

The 1978 law provides that "presidential records" including records of the president's advisors, are public. A court order by a federal judge in an earlier case brought by Armstrong prevented the Bush administration from erasing the hard drives and tapes, as did a subpoena by independent counsel Joseph DiGenova, investigating the Bush administration searches of Clinton's passport files.

The Bush-Wilson agreement "is a blatant violation of the law," says Michael Tankersley, and attorney with Public Citizen Litigation Group and the lead counsel in the case. "The Presidential Records Act was specifically enacted to prevent Presidents from making private arrangements to thwart access to records concerned their administration."

Tankersley told Newsbytes that he has discussed the issue with Peterson and she says she intends to follow the Bush-Wilson agreement. "We would prefer if they renounced the agreement," he said, "but they say they plan to implement it."

Officials at the National Archives refused comment, saying they had not yet seen the suit against them. (Kennedy Maize/19941215/Press Contact: Michael Tankersley, Public Citizen, 202-833-3000)

Major Vendors Team On Hard Disk Interface Standard

12/15/94 LONDON, ENGLAND, 1994 DEC 15 (NB) -- Hewlett-Packard, Quantum and Seagate have teamed up to actively support and promote a new 40 megabytes-per-second (MBps) Ultra SCSI (small computer system interface) and 100MBps Fiber Channel Arbitrated Loop (FC-AL) data storage interface standards.

According to a joint statement issued by the three companies, they believe that these interfaces, as standards in the industry, will serve near- and long-term cost and performance requirements of the

computer storage industry.

The three hard disk drive companies have agreed that the long-term direction for SCSI will be FC-AL over other serial interfaces such as SSA. FC-AL is a subset of the Fiber Channel network systems interconnection standard adopted by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

According to HP, FC-AL It is a serial data storage interface designed for high-end, high-throughput applications including storage for mainframes, supercomputers, disk array subsystems and enterprise system servers. The first generation of FC-AL, it is claimed, provides a path to much higher performance in addition to offering better flexibility and better performance than other serial storage interfaces.

HP officials claim that Ultra SCSI will serve as an interim solution for customers who want additional performance over traditional parallel SCSI, but are not yet ready to make the switch to a new serial interface.

Ultra SCSI is billed as an extension of the parallel SCSI standard that is designed to keep up with the throughput requirements of minicomputers, workstations, network file servers, and disk array subsystems. Plans call for disk drives incorporating Ultra SCSI or FC-AL interfaces to be shipping in the next year.

"To have the support of three disc drive companies of the stature of HP, Quantum and Seagate behind these two interface standards is an important step towards defining the future of system storage," said Hossein Moghadam, Seagate's senior vice president of data storage products.

"FC-AL clearly provides high-performance disk drive and systems manufacturers with levels of performance and flexibility needed in a standardized bus for the future of system storage. In the meantime, Ultra SCSI nicely bridges the gap in performance between Fiber Channel and conventional Fast/Wide SCSI, and does so at incremental cost for a doubling of conventional performance," he said.

Bib Tillman, HP's disk memory division general manager, said that he believes FC-AL is "a breakthrough interface technology that will provide users with superior performance and additional flexibility in configuring systems. Ultra SCSI continues the evolution of SCSI to keep up with the increased performance demands of systems and disks."

So how fast is FC-AL? The system is designed to handle up to 100 MBps data transfers to Fiber Channel host systems. Up to 126 disk drives can be supported on a single interface connection. It is claimed to support the SCSI-3 interface protocol for "easy integration," and enables "simple attachment" with no settings of jumpers or terminators. The standard provides device-to-device copper cable lengths of up to 30 meters or box-to-box lengths of 10 kilometers.

According to HP, Ultra SCSI effectively extends the life of the parallel SCSI standard and will be available as early as the first quarter of 1995 on hard disk drives and related controllers and adapters.

Ultra SCSI, which is supported by the ANSI XT310 standards committee, can double a disk drive's burst data transfer rate with minimal changes in firmware and no changes to the physical connection. The interface provides buffer-to-host data transfer rates of up to 40 MBps in a 16-bit implementation or 20 MBps in an eight-bit implementation. (Sylvia Dennis/19941214/Press Contact: PA Consulting, +44-71-730-9000; Reader Contact: Hewlett-Packard, +44-344-369222)

Quick Test For Flawed Pentium

12/13/94 NEW YORK, NEW YORK, U.S.A., 1994 DEC 13 (NB) -- Do you really want to know whether that hot new Pentium you just put on your desk has the famous Intel bug inside? Here's a quick test, courtesy of the New York Times.

Fire up your favorite spreadsheet and enter this: (4,195,835/3,145,727)*3,145,727 The correct answer is 4,195,835. A flawed Pentium will give you 4,195,579.

This was tested on the new Pentium 90 in the Washington Newsbytes office and, as expected, there is a bug inside (but it does not get in the way of the blazing performance in such things as word processing or file management).

Intel is expected to post a patch for the chip on the Internet by Christmas. Non-Intel patches are appearing in many places, but they have generally have a major drawback: they disable the floating point capability of the chip. (Kennedy Maize/19941213/Public Contact: Intel, 800-628-8686)

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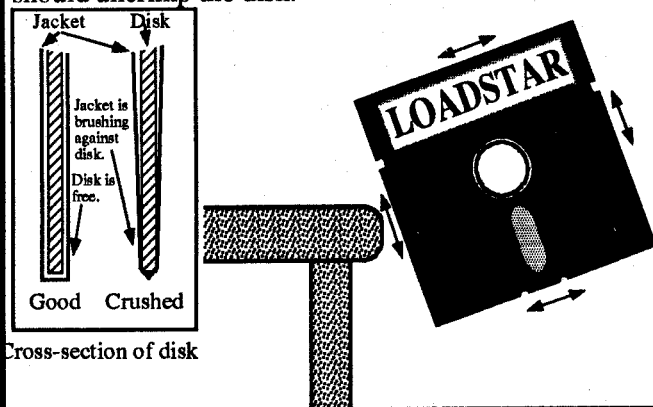
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BASIC 64 Compiler (Abacus)	\$17.00
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Aprotek Modem adapter (C= to Ext. PC Modem)	\$20.00
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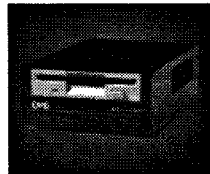
Increase Speed Up to 1500% while retaining 100% compatibility

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FD Series

3.2 and 1.6 MB 3.5" Floppy Drives

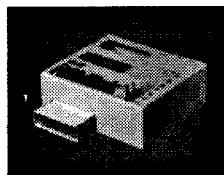
The FD-2000 and FD-4000 disk drives utilize today's latest 3.5 inch disk drive technology. FD-2000's support 800K (1581 style) and 1.6 MB (High Density) formats, while the FD-4000 also offers support for the 3.2 MB (Enhanced Density) disk format. Fast and reliable, they support 1541, 1571 and 1581 style partitions, Native Mode partitioning and can actually read and write 1581 disks. FD's feature built-in JiffyDOS, SWAP button and optional Real Time Clock. High capacity, speed and compatibility make the FD right for every application, including GEOS.



RAMLink™

Power-Backed Expandable REU

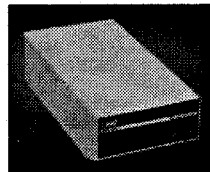
The fastest possible form of storage, RAMLink provides instant access to files and retains data while your computer is turned off. Easy to use and expandable up to 16 MB, RAMLink utilizes the same powerful operating system found in CMD Hard Drives. Unlike Commodore REU's which are compatible with less than 1% of commercial software, RAMLink supports more than 80% of the commercial titles. RAMLink also offers built-in JiffyDOS Kernel, SWAP feature, reset button, enable/disable switch, pass-thru port and RAM port for REU/GEORAM use. RAMLink offers maximum speed, expandability and compatibility with all types of software and hardware including GEOS.



HD Series

SCSI Hard Drive for the C-64/128

HD Series Hard Drives are available in capacities up to 1 GB, are fully partitionable, and can emulate 1541, 1571, & 1581 disks while Native partitions utilize MSDOS-style subdirectories. HD's connect easily to the serial bus or parallel via RAMLink. Includes built-in JiffyDOS, SWAP feature and RTC. HD's offer superior compatibility with most commercial software including BBS, Productivity and GEOS. And with new pricing, HD Series drives offer the lowest cost per megabyte of any C64/128 storage device.



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Creative Micro Designs, Inc.

P.O. Box 646
East Longmeadow, MA 01028

Info: (413) 525-0023
Fax: (413) 525-0147